THE COMPUTER RAG

newsletter of the
Yokosuka Computer Club
May/June 1984

News, Gossip, and Innuendo from the
Western Pacific

Local Gossip

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, June 13 at 1800, at OEC (top floor of Barracks C). YCC members are encouraged to attend and bring a guest. Among the topics to be discussed: development of Special Interest Groups, planning a Workshop for Computer Novices, and a report on the Micro Computer Show '84.

LAST MEETING: Held May 9th, there was an underwhelming turnout -- not even the President showed up. In spite if this there was a lot of activity and much was accomplished.

Kurt Tritchler offered an excellent presentation on the IBM PC. Not only did he explain why he thought the PC was a great machine (and demonstrate some programs to illustrate this point of view) but he went on to explain problems he encountered with the machine, capabilities and limitations he was not aware of at time of purchase, several interesting comments on ComputerLand, and observations on how the PC had changed his way of viewing information.

A number of items were presented as New Business. An Apple Special Interest Group was formed, with Frank Tierney of MOTU7 as the contact point. The Apple SIG is planning to meet once a month at noontime at MOTU7 to discuss Apple related developments. One of the things the Apple SIG will do is help people with Apple clones get their software to run. Frank Caperino led an informative discussion on how to use The Source in Japan. (Yes, folks, it can be done!) The newsletter was finally named, and some members have volunteered to develop a logo to be used on the newsletter.

There was a lively discussion on producing a listing of YCC members names, addresses, phone numbers, and areas of interest, for distribution with the club newsletter. The rationale behind the listing would be to help facilitate communication between computer users, particularly where one member needs help with a problem. It was decided if a member does NOT want this information made available to other YCC members, they should contact the newsletter editor by June 30 and ask to have the information withheld.

There was an opportunity to sign up for a trip to the MicroComputer Show '84. Alas, for the trip to take place 20 people were needed, and only 7 signed up. The issue of increasing attendance at club meetings was discussed. Some members felt many people could not attend due to the night of the week or the time the meetings were held. The possibility of holding two meetings each month, one on the second Wednesday of each month and the other on a different day (fourth Thursday?) met with some interest. Another poll (the first generated few responses) will be conducted to find out what the best day and time would be for a second meeting.

There was a discussion of where to place the club's software library in order to provide maximum access to members without sacrificing security. It was decided the base library would be an ideal location, especially if YCC members could check out a key to a filing cabinet containing the library by showing their membership card at the desk. The librarian will be approached with this proposition.

Problems involved in trying to ship Zenith microcomputers to Japan under the restrictions of the GEA offer were reviewed, and various solutions were presented. As some people on base have indeed ordered the system, it is just a matter of time before we find out what shipping methodology works best.

An impassioned plea was made for volunteers -- to offer presentations on machines, software, peripherals, concepts, or any item of interest relating to the microcomputer world. In order for the club to maintain its high standards of sharing information, there must be volunters (draftees???) to do the presenting. Some club members offered to try and set up a demonstration of the Macintosh. (The offer for a free subscription to the newsletter still stands!)

Dave Cornish could not attend but made his KayPro 4 available for display, and many members took advantage of the opportunity to get some hands-on experience with this NICE machine and its extensive collection of software. (The manuals accompanying the machine make a stack over a foot high.)

ELECTIONS were finally held, and the new officers are: President -- Lawrence Charters; Vice President -- Gary Shrout; Secretary/Treasurer -- Kurt Tritchler; Newsletter Editor -- Kathleen Charters; Librarian -- Jeff Hancock. Mr. Shrout wasn't even at the meeting, which is probably a good reason for making sure you attend. All officers except the President were elected unanimously; no one joined Mr. Charters in voting against him.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION: There have been many inquiries as to how one can subscribe to the newsletter. The newsletter is just one of the benefits of being a member of the Yokosuka Computer Club. For your membership fee you get a newsletter subscription, access to club software and periodicals, informative monthly (maybe even bi-monthly) meetings, discount floppy disks, the opportunity to join (or form) a Special Interest Group, and the opportunity to share your problems and your experiences with other interested souls. If you are not a YCC member, and wish to receive the newsletter, join the club and receive the benefits of membership (or bring a Macintosh for demonstration). If the YCC does not meet your needs, let us know what changes would make the club more useful to you.

NEWSLETTER WARNING: Several people have been receiving free copies of the newsletter for various reasons. Because the club membership has grown substantially, duplicating the newsletter has become something of a strain, so: THIS WILL BE THE LAST NEWSLETTER YOU RECEIVE IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER. No more Mr. Nice Micro.

WORKSHOP FOR COMPUTER NOVICES: There seems to be a large body of people who are interested in microcomputers, and may even be owners of microcomputers, but do not know "How To Get Started." To this end, it has been proposed the club sponsor a one day workshop covering hardware (Geting to know your -- Apple, IBM PC, Heathkit/Zenith, Tandy, Atari, Commodore, Kaypro, Osborne, etc), software (And what is -- a word processor, data base manager, electronic spread sheet, etc.), and perhaps even programming (How do you say it in -- BASIC, Machine Language, MUMPS, PASCAL, etc.).

How about it? What would you like to see? What would you be willing to do? When and where should this be done? How should it be advertised? Come to the next YCC meeting and make your voice heard and your special talents known!

Non-Local Gossip

IBM "POPCORN": To be announced "soon", the newest of the IBM microcomputers uses the 80286 and runs Xenix. The version with a 20MB hard disk and ports for four users runs $10,000.

BILL GATES: Now that he's made the cover of Time magazine, Bill Gates will go into hybernation for six months to work on product development. Gates ranks just after Steve Jobs and just ahead of Adam Osborne in free publicity, but, unlike Jobs and Osborne, almost all the attention lavished on Gates is positive.

ALAN KAY: Has left Atari to become an Apple fellow. Kay was THE key researcher at Xerox, responsible for the "smalltalk" language, windows, mice, etc. He gave no reason for leaving Atari, but recent developments indicate Atari is concentrating on short-term profits, not long-term research. Stated Kay, "I guess the tree of research must from time to time be refreshed with the blood of bean counters."

MORE ATARI: 800 "core workers" were laid off as of June 1 at Atari's Sunnyvale headquarters, most of them middle management workers. Atari lost $35 million on $154 million in first quarter sales.

TAIWAN BLOCKADED?: Asst. Defense Secretary Richard Perle, in Senate testimony, revealed off-the-shelf Apples were being used in NATO exercises to target battlefield nuclear weapons. (Apples do not fire the missiles, just plan targeting.) Perle wants Congress to limit exports of small computers because of their possible use in target analysis and planning, shipboard systems control, communications, etc.

SEARS: Will carry the Macintosh and Lisa II. Prior to this announcement, Sears had avoided Apple's machines because they were not "serious."

MORE MAC: Apple sold 70,000 Macs in its first 100 days, 20,000 more than planned. Apple claims it could have sold over 200,000, but production facilities aren't up to the task.

APPLE IIc: A 6.2 earthquake shook San Francisco during the formal introduction of the Apple IIc, demonstrating once again that Steve Jobs has Clout. The Apple IIc, as several people have suggested, shows "Woz is back," and has proven to be very popular, especialy with previous Apple owners and users. The only major complaint is directed at the keyboard.

K-MART: Is pushing hard to carry the Apple IIc. The chain store presently carries the Atari 800XL, Comodore 64, VIC-20, and Commodore SX64. K-Mart is planning on adding a 242 ft. sq. Home Electronics Center in all of its 1500 stores.

HP LAUNCHES PORTABLE: Hewlett-Packard's new 8 lb. portable, imaginatively called the Portable, has a 384K ROM containing Lotus 1-2-3, Personal Applications Manager, and Memo Maker, a word processor, all running under MSDOS 2.11. Also standard is 272K of RAM, an 80x16 LCD screen featuring 480x128 graphics, and rechargable batteries good for roughly 8 hours, all for just (gulp) $2995. A battery powered 3.5" disk drive and battery powered ink jet are available seperately.

PEACHTREE: Has introduced some sophisticated business packages for Commodore and Atari. In the past, Peachtree wouldn't bother itself with any machine which cost less than $2500.

TI TO MAKE SUPER CHIP: TI will "second source" National Semiconductor's outstanding 16000 microprocessor, renumbered the 32000 series.

QUOTE: "The idea of the monumental study published once a year is great, but it has the same qualities as military aircraft -- it's either experimental or it's obsolete." Brian Boyle, Gnostic Concepts, Inc. (a computer consulting firm).

Newsletter Notes

CONTRIBUTE FOR FREE: Members are highly encouraged to submit items for publication in the newsletter. Articles, quips, quotable quotes, want ads -- anything relating to microcomputers would be welcomed. Send contributions to the editor:

K.G. Charters
USNH Box 65-1561
FPO 98765

Write, in the upper right hand corner, "MPS," and put your FULL return address on the envelope. Postage is free.

FORMATS ACCEPTED: Newsletter contributions can consist of photocopy-ready text or disk files. Disk files should be in ASCII on soft-sectored single-sided 5.25" disks using one of the following formats: Actrix, Cromemco, DEC VT180, Epson QX-10, Heath/Zenith Z-89, 90, or 100, HP-125, IBM CP/M-86 or PCDOS, Kaypro II, Morrow, NEC PC-8000, Osborne, Otrona, TRS-80 Model I, III, or 4, Radio Shack Color Computer DOS or OS-9, and Xerox 820 and 820 II. RAM files from Radio Shack Model 100 or NEC PC-8201 machines are also acceptable. All disks will be returned at the next scheduled meeting.

Want Ads

WANTED: Cray-1S, any condition. Will pay up to $1000; more if software included. Getting desperate; need Cray for Star Trek game development. Contact President at editor's address.

WANTED: CP/M terminal package for Osborne-1. Contact President at editor's address.

WANTED: Logo for newsletter. Contact editor.

Yet Another Survey

Several members have complained recently about 1) days and hours of club meetings, 2) lack of people available to answer questions about their particular brand of micro or software, and 3) lack of presentations devoted to their particular interests. In an effort to combat these complaints, we offer Yet Another Survey. Since very few people responded to our first survey (a couple months ago) a jaded observer might conclude a second one really isn't necessary. Prove us wrong: tell us what you want. Send your responses to:

L.I. Charters
USNH Box 65-1561
FPO 98765

Postage is free, so you'll have no one to blame for not responding except that face in the mirror.

-- Lawrence Charters, President

Ye Questions

1. What would be a good time for club meetings? Please provide specific days of the week and times.

2. What kind of presentations would you like to see at club meetings? Would you be willing to offer presentations yourself? (Specifics, please.)

3. Do you have any objection to having your name and address published in the Newsletter? (See "Last Meeting" section for details, and respond by June 30 if you object.)

4. Would you be willing to help in a Microcomputer Workshop for Novices? Should such a workshop be held before the start of school in the fall, or before Christmas? What topics should be offered?

5. What would you like the club to do that it is not doing now?